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SOVIETS LOSING CLOUT IN CENTRAL AMERICA, STUDY SAYS

The Soviet Union is increasing its presence in the daily lives of Central Americans, but is losing clout in the region to the Catholic Church and Western trade, according to a University of Miami study released Sunday.

The 31-page report, titled ''Soviet Attitudes Toward, Aid to, and Contacts with Central American Revolutionaries,'' was commissioned by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

It contains previously unavailable data on Soviet involvement, said the author, University of Miami professor Carl Jacobsen, a consultant to the U.S. State Department on Soviet matters.

''Moscow's presence in Central America emerges as both more extensive and more multi-faceted than generally appreciated,'' said Jacobsen. In addition to its military and economic involvement, Moscow maintains ''a slew of other contact points,'' he said.

The Soviet Union sponsors student exchanges, peace congresses, sports and youth festivals, professional and trade associatiions, and ''friendship clubs'' in the region, he noted.

But Moscow's ability to control events in Central America may actually be one the wane, Jacobsen said. Counterweights to the Soviet influence, such as aid from Western Europe and the Catholic Church, are more penetrating and far-reaching than previously thought, he said.

Jacobsen's report is based on reports from western intelligence sources and on surveys of Soviet books, military journals and media coverage.

Those publications contained frequent comments on European presence and pervasive church influence in Central America, Jacobsen said.

Japan's trade with Nicaragua has risen in direct reverse proportion to Washington's economic withdrawal, Jacobsen said. Algeria picked up the sugar crop that America stopped buying.

''Aid from Western Europe and (United Nations) agencies has been even more substantial, and hence crucial,'' Jacobsen said. ''Furthermore, it must be said that in the context of her overall aid to Third World nations, Moscow's commitment to Nicaragua is modest.''

Italy, West Germany, Spain, Austria and Canada are sending food and economic aide to Central America. Sweeden has sent money for transportation projects. Mexico and Venezuela have extended credits for oil purchases.

In Nicaragua, a mid-1983 analysis concluded half of the country's assistance came from Western Europe and Latin America, while only 20 percent came from Communist countries.

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